

Know the Five Signs

1 in 5 students may struggle with a mental health condition

Our students may be suffering emotionally, and we may not recognize the symptoms. Here are five signs that may indicate that someone is in emotional distress and might need help:



- 1. Personality changes.**
Sudden or gradual change in the way a student typically behaves.



- 2. Uncharacteristically angry, anxious, agitated or moody.**
A student has more frequent problems controlling his or her temper and seems irritable or unable to calm down.



- 3. Withdrawal or isolation from other people.**
A student who used to be socially engaged may pull away from family and friends and stop taking part in activities that used to be enjoyable. In more severe cases, the student may start missing school days or individual classes.



- 4. May neglect self-care and engage in risky behavior.**
A change in the student's level of personal care or unexpected acts of poor judgment.



- 5. Overcome with hopelessness and overwhelmed by circumstances.**
A student who used to be optimistic and now can't find anything to be hopeful about. That student may be suffering from extreme or prolonged grief, feelings of worthlessness or guilt.

You Recognize a Student is Struggling. Now What?

The first step in having a conversation about mental health is noticing the signs.



Connect.

Through your regular interaction with the student, note any changes in behavior.



Reach out.

Check in with the student. "How are you doing?" is a simple way to engage.



Inspire hope.

Tell them that you care about them.



Offer help.

It may take more than one offer, and you may need to reach out to others who share your concern about the student.



Show compassion.

Show a willingness to find a solution when the student may not know they need help.

Share your concern. Refer the student to the school counselor or administrator if additional support is needed.

Sources:

Adapted from the national "Know the Signs" campaign. Learn more at ChangeDirection.org.
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
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